

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release April 9, 1975

Levitt 202/343-5634

### NEW BOOKLET DESCRIBES HISTORY OF FEDERAL-STATE COOPERATION IN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Federal-State cooperation in wildlife management and the sportsmen's role in financing the needs of wildlife is the subject of "35 Years of Shared Wildlife Management," a new 36-page, full-color booklet recently published by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The booklet is a tribute to the benefits of the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1938. The law's fundamental concept was that hunters would pay for the needs of wildlife by taxing their own purchases of sporting arms and ammunition. Known as the Pittman-Robertson or "P-R" Act because of its sponsors, Senator Key Pittman of Nevada and Representative Willis Robertson of Virginia, the law was eagerly supported by sportsmen and conservationists.

Under the Act, Federal excise taxes are redistributed to the States on a 75-25 matching basis. Since 1938, the fund has made \$540 million available to the States. The flexibility of the Act gives the States wide latitude in spending the money.

Some States have concentrated their efforts in buying land for wildlife management purposes including refuges and public hunting areas. Over 3-1/4 million acres have been purchased for wildlife with P-R funds. Others have concentrated their efforts on research. The "cap-chur gun" or dart gun, a weapon capable of hitting an animal with a hypodermic needle

(over)

full of an immobilizing drug, was designed by biologists working in a P-R program. In other cases, P-R funds have gone into habitat improvement and into the development of methods of improving management techniques.

One of the most significant contributions of the law has been its impact on professionalizing wildlife management. With the coming of the Federal Aid program States moved to employ trained biologists. Today, almost 80 percent of wildlife professionals in Federal and State governments spent part of their early career in programs financed by P-R funds.

Pittman-Robertson projects have done much for nongame wildlife and species threatened with extinction, and there is a growing trend among the States to direct funds and expertise into such problems. Today, at least 23 States are expending Federal Aid moneys on research and management for the specific benefit of nongame species.

The Federal Aid program allows the States to include training in hunter ethics, wildlife management, survival, archery safety, and hunter responsibility for the improvement of wildlife stewardship. These same moneys have also helped to finance the studies that have analyzed the causes of wildlife decline. This research has suggested the danger to humans from the same causes.

The booklet is for sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. The price is \$1.35.

x x x